



IV. Mathews County Today and Tomorrow: Conditions, Opportunities, Policies and Strategies

Economy: Special Action Projects

The economy of Mathews County is the foundation for the overall sustainability of the community. The following paragraphs discuss initial projects that can assist the County in progressing toward the established goals and strategies for the Economy.

Tourism - Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail

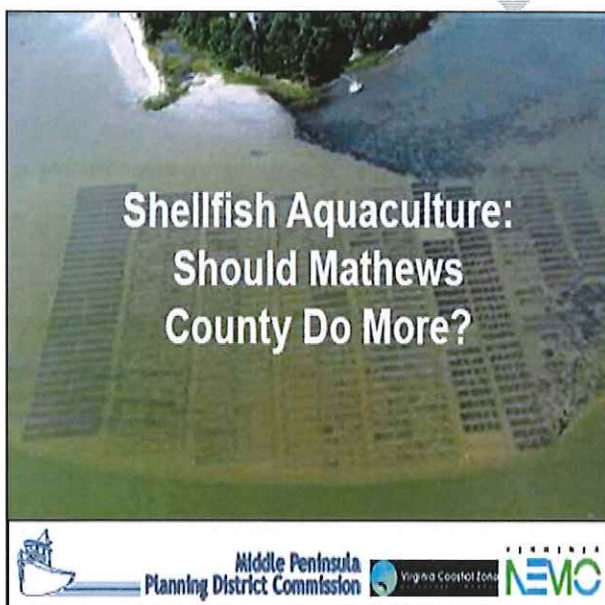
Several agencies have developed mapping and attraction information on-line for the East River section of Mathews County. This project initiative is known as the Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail. Mapping for additional areas of the County is planned for the future. This ties in well with the expanded efforts of the National Park Service to promote the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail in the region.

Web GIS mapping of the East River by VIMS showing the Mathews County Maritime Heritage Trail Facilities and Attractions



Aquaculture and Waterfront Infrastructure

In 2008, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission received funding through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program to study aquaculture and waterfront infrastructure. In 2009, the PDC focused on Mathews County and established an Aquaculture/Working Waterfront Steering Committee for the purposes of promoting



The Project

1. Explore how local government can support an active commercial seafood industry
2. Assess the economic webbing of the aquaculture and related commercial seafood industry and working waterfront infrastructure in Mathews
3. Suggest new or modified public policy to strengthen aquaculture-working waterfront infrastructure

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aquaculture and preserving and strengthening the working waterfront infrastructure of the County. Consisting of commercial and hobby oyster and clam farmers, county planners, and the Maritime Foundation within Mathews County, the committee identified current challenges within the aquaculture industry, they shared business models, and discussed how the industry could be supported or enhanced by the county through public policy. As this Steering Committee continues its work and collaboration with businesses, citizens and governmental officials, there will be many worthy recommendations that can be pursued to enhance shellfish aquaculture, water quality and economic development opportunities in Mathews County.

**Code of Virginia 15.2-2211
Cooperation of local planning commissions
and other agencies.**

"The planning commission of any locality may cooperate with local planning commissions or legislative and administrative bodies and officials of other localities so as to coordinate planning and development among the localities. Planning commissions may appoint committees and may adopt rules as needed to effect such cooperation. Planning commissions may also cooperate with state and federal officials, departments and agencies. Planning commissions may request from such departments and agencies, and such departments and agencies of the Commonwealth shall furnish, such reasonable information which may affect the planning and development of the locality."

Aquaculture Overlay District

An Aquaculture Overlay District should be considered for the coastal areas of the County and applicable waters and submerged lands which are determined to be of significant value for aquaculture. Application of this district for land management purposes should be considered after careful study and collaboration with appropriate regional and state agencies. Public and business involvement in developing and establishing this district will be extremely important in order to share information, promote understanding, and ensure a successful tool for promoting and protecting aquaculture.

While federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over water quality and subaqueous lands, Virginia planning legislation provides for local government to have jurisdiction over land and waters within its territorial boundaries for the purposes of improving the public health, safety, convenience and welfare of its citizens to plan for future development. Also, the legislation provides for cooperation with other legislative and administrative bodies in order to coordinate planning and development; furthermore, it provides that the planning commission may appoint committees and adopt rules as needed to affect cooperation.



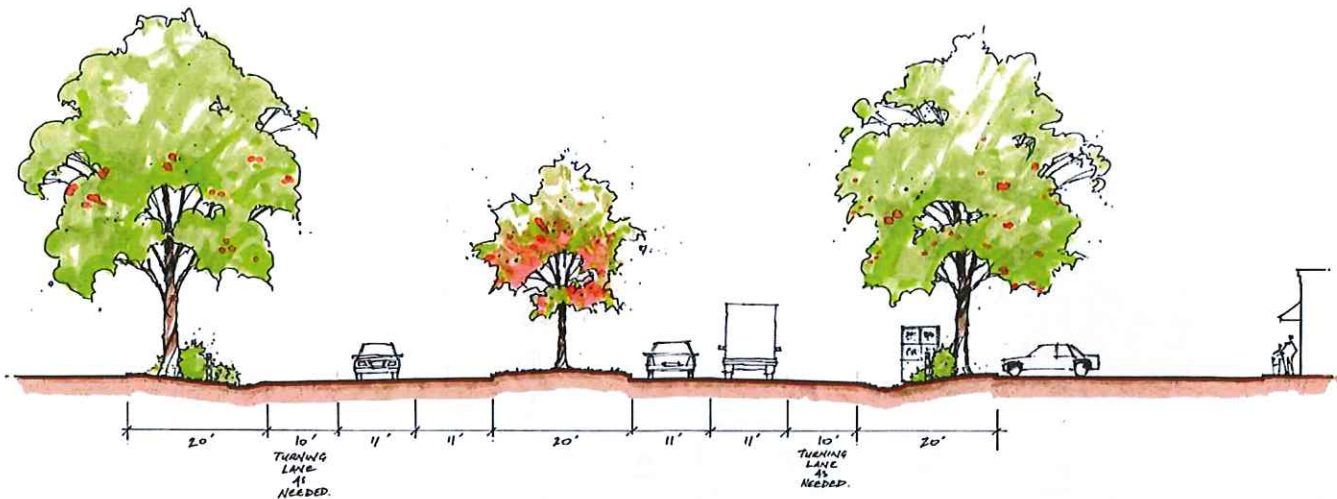
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Hotel and Conference Facility

In 2001, Mathews County commissioned a study to determine if there was a market for a conference center in the county. The study concluded that, as a tourist destination, the County would benefit from a quality hotel and conference facility with water access. The County should identify potential sites for development as well as existing facilities that could be redeveloped. Once a suitable location is determined, and its owner supportive, the County could assist in developing a concept plan to market to potential investors.

Entrance Corridor Development Guidelines

The gateway entrances into Mathews County and to historic Mathews Court House provide important first impressions to visitors and lay the foundation for development in the County. In particular, commercial development in designated nodes along the corridor can benefit both the economic and aesthetic qualities of Mathews County. Corridor development guidelines would guide such elements as site and building layout, signs, access points, and landscaping.



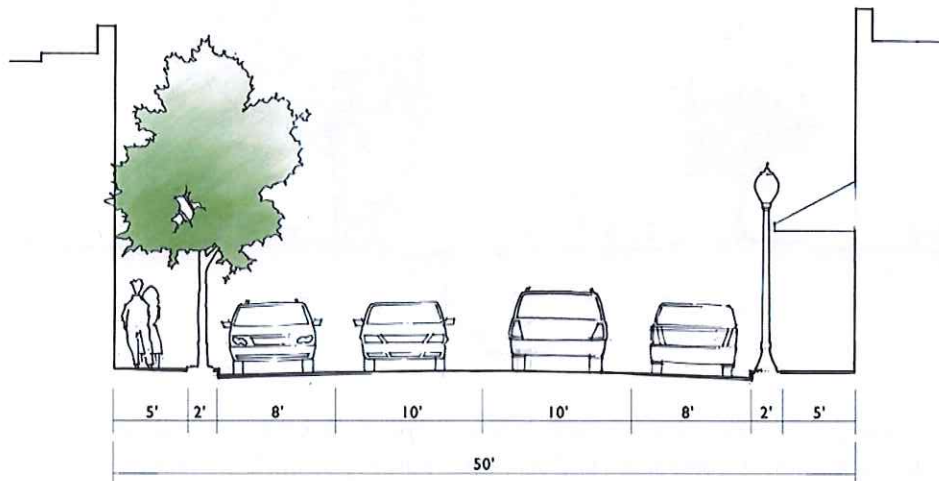
Typical cross-section of gateway entrance corridor (four lane example) showing landscaping at street and in the median, common access points, ground signs and screened parking at building front.



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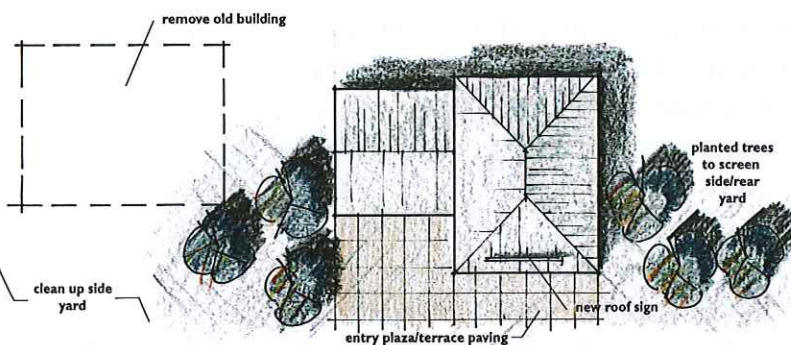
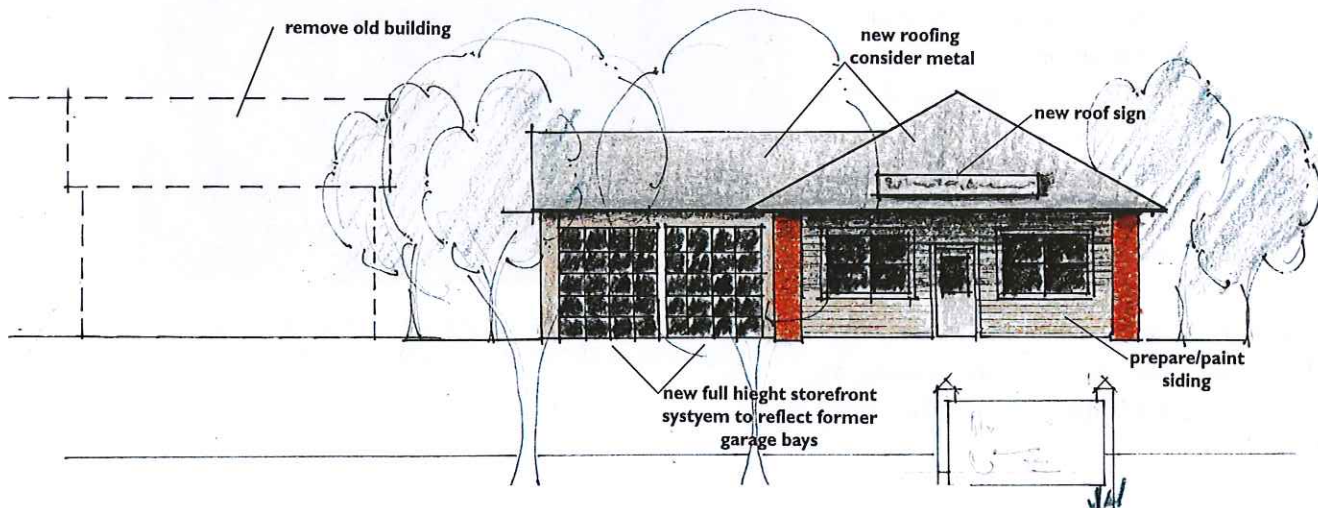
Typical cross-section of gateway entrance corridor (two lane example) showing landscaping at street and in a median (where possible) with a pedestrian/bicycle access trail or sidewalk. Shoulders of road could include natural swales or use pervious surfaces to manage stormwater runoff.



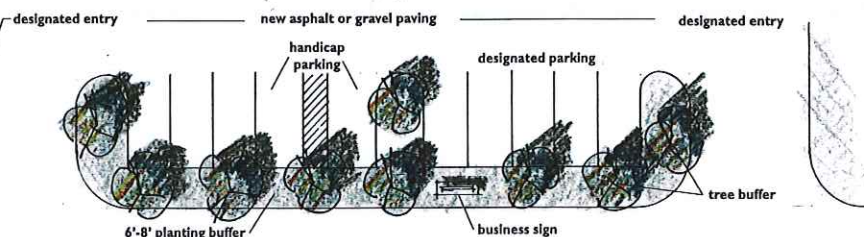
Typical cross section of commercial corridor in designated Village or Hamlet showing proposed development pattern. Buildings are located close to the street; lighting is pedestrian scale; sidewalks provide easy access to stores; parking is located on the street or to the sides or rear of buildings; street trees provide quality landscaping; an alternative may be large planters on the sidewalk; signs are appropriately located on the building or an awning.



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Above: Before and after illustration of renovated commercial building along Route 14 entrance corridor.



Left: Site plan for new commercial use of property showing improved street frontage with controlled entrances, screened parking, landscaping and appropriate signage.



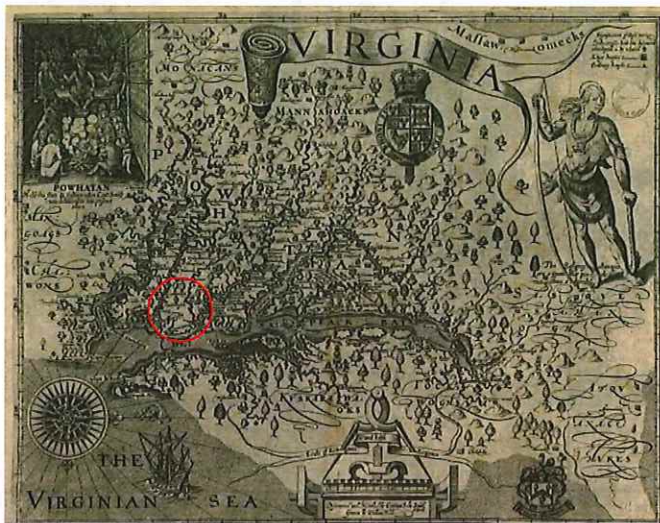
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History and Culture

Brief County History

Mathews County has a rich history⁶ that extends back to Native Americans and the early English settlement of Virginia. Early artifacts found in Mathews on Gwynn's Island date back to 10,000 BC. The first known people of the region were the Chiskiake Indians who originated in York County and later relocated to the Piankatank River in the mid-1600s.

In 1608, Captain John Smith explored the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, mapping early Mathews County and the larger region. His historical map of Virginia, published in 1612, provided an early insight into the rich waters and lands of the region. While in the vicinity of Gwynn's Island on one of his voyages, he was wounded by a stingray and was taken ashore to what is now Stingray Pointe near Deltaville in Middlesex County. Several years later, Gwynn's Island was explored by Colonel Hugh Gwynn. In 1640, Gwynn received a grant of 1700 acres from King Charles I of England, marking Gwynn's Island as an early contribution to Mathews' settlement history.



Captain John Smith's 1612 Map of Virginia. Mathews County area is shown as a circle for reference.

The real settlement of Mathews County began circa 1650 with the establishment of Kingston Parish, which was then a part of Gloucester County. The original Anglican Church is no longer standing, but the settlement environs still exist today and Christ Episcopal Kingston Parish Church (1904). Many important Mathews' families and individuals have ties to the parish and its history.

Mathews County has a rich history in the American Revolution. It was the site of one of the Revolutionary War's first naval battles, the Battle of Cricket Hill. In 1776, General Andrew Lewis of the Continental Army waged battle against Lord Dunmore and his troops just offshore of Gwynn's Island. The encounter damaged the British camp and forced evacuation of the

⁶ Mathews History and Statistics, www.visitmathewsva.com. A Brief History of Gwynn's Island, www.gwynnsislandmuseum.org. Mathews County Historical Society, www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~vamchs. Middle Peninsula Historic Marker Tour, www.mppdc.com.



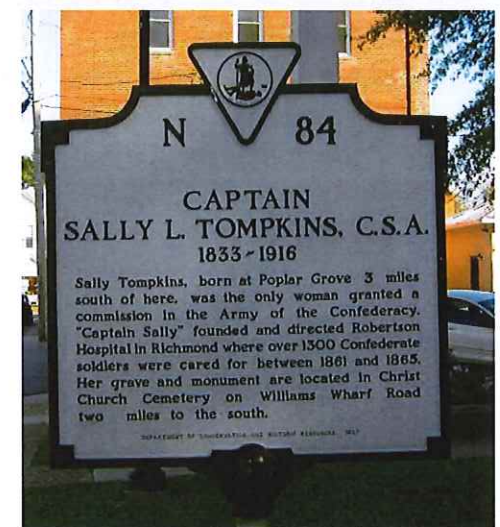
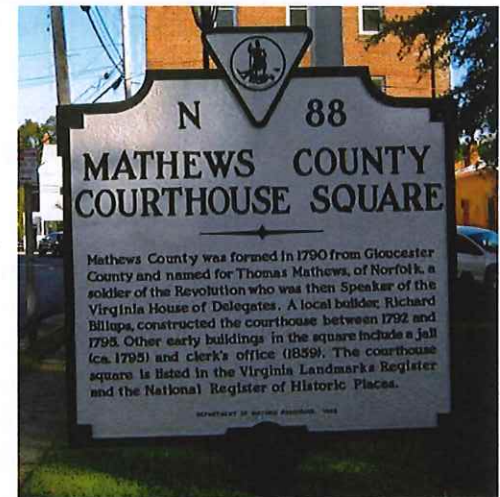
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British from the island and back to sea. Another inland military post was at Fort Nonsense, located near County border with Gloucester County. This fort saw little battle; however, its earthworks are still visible today.

Following the Revolutionary War, Mathews was officially established as a County in 1791. It was named in honor of the Brigadier General Thomas Mathews, who was then speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and introduced the resolution calling for the formation of a new county. He was also a prominent leader in the American Revolutionary War. The County seat was Mathews and in the early 1830s, the historic courthouse and square were constructed.

By the 1790s the County was an active shipbuilding center on the Chesapeake Bay⁷, supported by the abundant forests of live oaks. In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the building of a stone lighthouse at the County southernmost tip on the Chesapeake Bay – New Point Comfort. This historical lighthouse still stands today, although only accessible by boat, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the Mathews Maritime Museum, more wooden sailing vessels were built in Mathews County than in any other part of Virginia from the late 1790s to 1845. It is estimated that more than 2,000 seagoing schooners were built in Mathews during the 18th and 19th centuries. The East River and Williams Wharf were centers of maritime activity. Many Mathews' men made their living as merchant mariners, watermen, or shipbuilders. By 1835, Mathews County was a bustling area with several post offices and small villages.

Mathews County also has a rich Civil War history. A Confederate Coast Guard was active in Mathews, assisting the southern cause. A stone Confederate Memorial stands in the Mathews Court House Green in commemoration of the County Confederate soldiers. One resident, Captain Sally Tompkins, was appointed as the only female Confederate



⁷ History of the New Point Comfort Lighthouse, www.newpointcomfort.com. Mathews Maritime Museum, www.mathewsmaritimemuseum.com.



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Officer. She operated the Robertson Hospital in Richmond that cared for over 1,300 soldiers during the war.

By the 20th Century, residents continued their relationship with the sea, either in their daily work as watermen or in their country's service as members of the naval forces. The fisheries and seafood of the Chesapeake Bay were productive and known for their quality and quantity all over the east coast. Today, Mathews County is still recognized for its fisheries, waterfront, and marine environment. While there are challenges that must be addressed with respect to the decreasing fisheries, sensitive ecosystem, and increasing demand for waterfront development, Mathews County continues to be in the forefront of looking carefully to the future, while continuing a long tradition of close-knit families, scenic water vistas, and a history with the sea.

Properties on the National Register of Historic Places

As of March 2009, Mathews County has eight properties that are officially listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.⁸ Two additional properties are under study and pending designation. These properties are described in the following paragraphs and shown on the map on the following page.

Mathews County Courthouse Square

Placed on the National Register in 1977, Mathews County Courthouse Square in downtown Mathews is significant for its collection of buildings that reflect the growth of the County since 1790. A study prepared by the William and Mary Center for Archeological Research revealed that the courthouse building, which was once thought to be constructed in the 1790s by Richard Billups, was more likely built in the 1830s. The jail has stood on the courthouse grounds at least since the early nineteenth century, and the clerk's office was constructed in 1859. In



1930, the Mathews Memorial Library was built on the square, and in 1957 the county administration offices building was added. In recent years, the County has restored several of the buildings.

⁸ Virginia Department of Historic Resources, National and State Historic Registers for Mathews County. www.dhr.virginia.gov.



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HISTORIC RESOURCES

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Milford (Billups House)

Milford is an early home built circa 1770-1790 on the coastal plain of Billups Creek. The house was the home of George Billups, one of the first of the Billups family to come to Virginia. The house has remained in the family. The Billups Family has been involved in maritime pursuits in Mathews County over the years. There were officials of Kingston Parish and officers in the Militia. Also, they were planters. The house is an outstanding example of a dwelling for well-to-do country gentry of the late 18th Century in Tidewater Virginia. It is notable for its exceptional woodwork.

New Point Comfort Lighthouse

The New Point Comfort Lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The stone lighthouse was commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson and constructed by Elzy Burroughs (Mathews County) in 1804. The light was constructed in 1805. A retired sea captain, Isaac Foster, was the light keeper. It is the third oldest lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay. The 63-foot lighthouse has been separated from the land and the light keeper's house disappeared prior to 1963. The New Point Comfort peninsula upon which the lighthouse stands has been a landmark for navigators since the 17th Century. The lighthouse is endangered today because of erosion and the rising sea level. It is owned by Mathews County and is supported by several local groups, the New Point Lighthouse Preservation Task Force and the Mathews County Historical Society.

Hesse

Hesse is a Georgian plantation house near Blakes in the Piankatank District of Mathews County. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Hesse is set on a bluff overlooking the Piankatank River and Godfrey Bay. It was the originally the home of the Armistead family, a prominent colonial Virginia family. William Armistead patented 500 acres on the Piankatank River in 1659. The plantation at one time numbered about 3,900 acres. The construction date of the house has not been established; it is thought to be built between 1725 and 1750. Today, the house includes a 1952 south wing addition.

Poplar Grove Mill and House

Poplar Grove was built on the East River in the late 18th Century by Richard Billups. It was built for John Patterson and named for the many poplar trees he planted on the property. A tide operated mill has existed at Poplar Grove since colonial times; however the present building replaced the original mill that burned during the Civil War. Captain Sally Tompkins was born at Poplar Grove in 1833; she was the grand-daughter of John Patterson. Also, it is believed that the Poplar Grove mill ground corn for General Washington's troops when they camped nearby.

Old Thomas James Store

The old Thomas James Store stands behind the Sibley General Store on Main Street in historic



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Mathews Court House. At some point the building was moved from its original location fronting on Main Street. It is a one-story frame commercial building that is an excellent example of early 19th Century commerce. It has been described as being among a handful of surviving antebellum commercial buildings in the South today and a rare example of basic, one-story commercial building. It was operated by Thomas James; however, the date of the building has not been established – it is listed on the nomination as being circa 1810-1899.

Wolf Trap Light Station

The Wolf Trap Light Station was constructed in 1894 and operated by the U. S. Coast Guard. It replaced an earlier lighthouse that had been constructed in 1821. The structure is comprised of a cast-iron foundation cylinder, topped with a two-story brick, octagonal-shaped dwelling and a lantern. It is located offshore of the Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve.



Methodist Tabernacle

The Methodist Tabernacle is a large, open pavilion built in 1922 that is a rare example of an early 20th Century revival meeting facility in Virginia. The tabernacle is located in a cleared field amid woods near historic Mathews Court House. A large ditch still exists on the property which helped to drain the low-lying land and prevented worshippers from driving too close to the building.



Sibley's General Store (Pending, PIF)

Sibley's General Store consists of two joined buildings that have been used commercially to conduct retail trade in Mathews for almost 200 years. The front portion of the Sibley Store was built in 1899; the rear portion is circa 1840. The Old Thomas James Store lies behind the two buildings. Sibley's General Store is significant to the local economic and social development of Mathews County. It was Sibley's where all of Mathews County residents shopped. It received many goods via steamboat from other port cities and made them available to County residents. In addition, it also served as the Mathews post office, serving as a social hub.

B. Williams and Company Store (Pending Nomination)

The B. Williams and Company Store is a two-story frame mercantile building built circa 1869-70 that still occupies a strategic location beside the East River at Williams Wharf. It was constructed near the old Customs House that operated on the East River. For over three centuries, it has served the surrounding community in a variety of uses including tobacco port, customs facility, store, post office shipyard, steamboat dock, oyster shucking, canning house, and public landing. The store represents a link to Mathews' maritime and commercial history and is an important cornerstone in the history of the Williams Wharf area.



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Other Properties of Historic Significance

In addition to properties that are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, there are other properties of known local significance that are worthy of preservation. Some of these properties are identified and described below; additional properties may be identified later in conjunction with a more thorough study of historic properties in the County.

Tompkins Cottage

The Tompkins Cottage, circa 1815, is believed to be the oldest frame structure remaining in the County. It was the home of Captain Sally Tompkins, and her father, Christopher Tompkins, a local planter, merchant, sea captain and ship builder. It is located in Mathews, adjacent to the historic Courthouse Square and houses the Mathews County Historical Society. The property is owned by the County and is leased to the Historical Society.



Community Post Offices

Throughout Mathews County, there are small post offices in each of the communities. These small buildings are centers for social activity and represent a significant culture that is unique to the County and to each smaller community. Shown below are post offices in Hallieford, Gwynn, and Bavon.



Gwynn's Island Museum and Community Center

Gwynn's Island played an important part in the history of the County from its earliest beginnings. In celebration of that heritage the island has a museum dedicated to its history and a community center that is of notable architectural quality.





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West Mathews Community Center

The Community Center in West Mathews is an old school that has been renovated for community use.



Other Historic Sites

Additional sites noted as being of historic importance include the following properties:

- Auburn
- Green Plains
- Kingston Hall
- Providence
- Woodstock

Preservation Challenges and Opportunities 2030

Mathews County has a rich history that dates back to early Colonial times with relatively few documented properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the charm of the County is tied to its maritime heritage and its role as a center for small community commerce. Not only is County history important for residents to understand their community and provide a "sense of place," County history also is important from a tourism perspective that can substantially aid the local economy. There are many structures in the County that may be of important historical or cultural significance. More research and planning are needed to identify these important sites and to plan how the community should preserve and utilize these resources.

As of 2009, the Center for Coastal Resources Management at VIMS, the Mathews Maritime Foundation and other partner agencies have been working on the Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail which will showcase the valued coastal landscape and maritime history of the County. As this important project progresses, the historic information should be incorporated into future planning documents and appropriate user-friendly maps developed for residents and visitors.



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Planning/Development Policies

Action Strategies for History and Culture 2030

The following planning and development policies and action strategies are established to achieve the desired vision for historical and cultural resources in Mathews County:

Development Policies and Strategies for History and Culture	
HC 1	History and culture are fundamental to the quality of life in Mathews County. Significant historic, architectural and archeological sites should be identified, preserved, and protected.
	1. Promote and support the public policy initiatives identified in the 2014 Mathews County Architectural Reconnaissance Survey Report. a county-wide historic survey for Mathews to identify potential resources that should be documented and preserved. Work with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to develop and fund the county wide survey. In addition, promote and support the Mathews Historical Society's initiatives to survey archeological sites in the County.
	2. Encourage and assist in the development of a long-range Preservation Plan for managing and protecting important County historic and cultural resources.
	3. Develop and Consider adopting historic preservation overlay districts for the County zoning ordinance based upon the findings of the Architectural Reconnaissance Survey Report. identify potential properties or areas that should be included in the districts. In establishing a district, consider including a "buffer" area around the district or important sites to assist in preservation efforts.
	4. Identify or develop incentives that can assist property owners in managing and preserving their properties. Develop and maintain a list of potential resources and funding opportunities that may be available for preserving, rehabilitating, or restoring historic and cultural properties.
	5. Maintain and preserve important County-owned buildings and semi-public properties including the Courthouse Green, Fort Nonsense, New Point Comfort Lighthouse, and the Tompkins Cottage.
HC 2	History and Culture are potential economic tools for the future of Mathews County. The history and culture of the County represent an opportunity for tourism which is an important economic strategy for sustaining the economy and quality of life for the long-term.



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Development Policies and Strategies for History and Culture	
	1. Promote the visitor's guide to the historic, natural and cultural resources of Mathews County. Promote driving, bicycling, canoeing/kayaking and walking tour maps.
	2. Work with the Mathews County Visitor and Information Center (MCVIC), the Mathews Historical Society and other local historical organizations to publicize materials and coordinate <u>heritage</u> tourism efforts.
	3. Continue to promote cultural and performing arts as a magnet for drawing tourists to Mathews.
	4. Celebrate the heritage of Mathews County by developing a special heritage festival that can be hosted annually. Establish a Heritage Festival Committee to plan the event and coordinate activities throughout the County.
	5. Work with VIMS Center for Coastal Resources Management, Mathews Maritime Foundation, and other partner agencies to develop user-friendly guides, maps, etc. that promote the Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail.

History and Culture: Special Action Projects

The heritage of Mathews County provides an important sense of place for the community. The following discussions represent some initial projects that can further the goals and strategies discussed for History and Culture.

County-wide Historic Survey

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources provides matching funds for a historic survey. These funds are awarded on an annual basis and have been used by many localities in building their database of important historic properties.

The Mathews County Architectural Reconnaissance Survey, conducted in 2013-14, was funded by Mathews County and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) through its Cost-Share program with significant logistical support from the Mathews County Historical Society. DATA Investigations, LLC (DATA) and Commonwealth Preservation Group (CPG) partnered to undertake the survey.

The main objective of the survey was to document 180 previously uninventoried historic properties along with updating 50 previously inventoried properties in the County.



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Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services provide important support to residents and businesses of the County. Often, community residents fail to truly acknowledge the diversity of support services that are needed for community well-being and safety. Many of these facilities and services are provided by the County and some are provided by state, private, or volunteer agencies. The cost of providing these facilities is a frequent budgetary struggle using tax dollars and privately-raised funds. The following section discusses existing conditions, challenges and opportunities for the future for important community infrastructure and services, including: utilities, transportation, recreation, schools, public safety (police, fire and rescue) and human services (social, mental health, medical, etc.).

Utilities

Water

Mathews County is underlain by the Yorktown-Eastover Aquifer, which is part of the Virginia Coastal Plain Aquifer System. An illustration of the primary aquifer systems in the coastal plain region is shown on the following page (Mathews County would be toward the east). This aquifer is positioned approximately 10 to 200 feet below the surface and is the second most heavily used source of groundwater for the region, supplying domestic yields of 10-20 GPM, and some large production wells (near West Point in King William County).⁹ With the exception of Gloucester County, the region depends mostly on groundwater to provide its domestic and industrial water supplies.

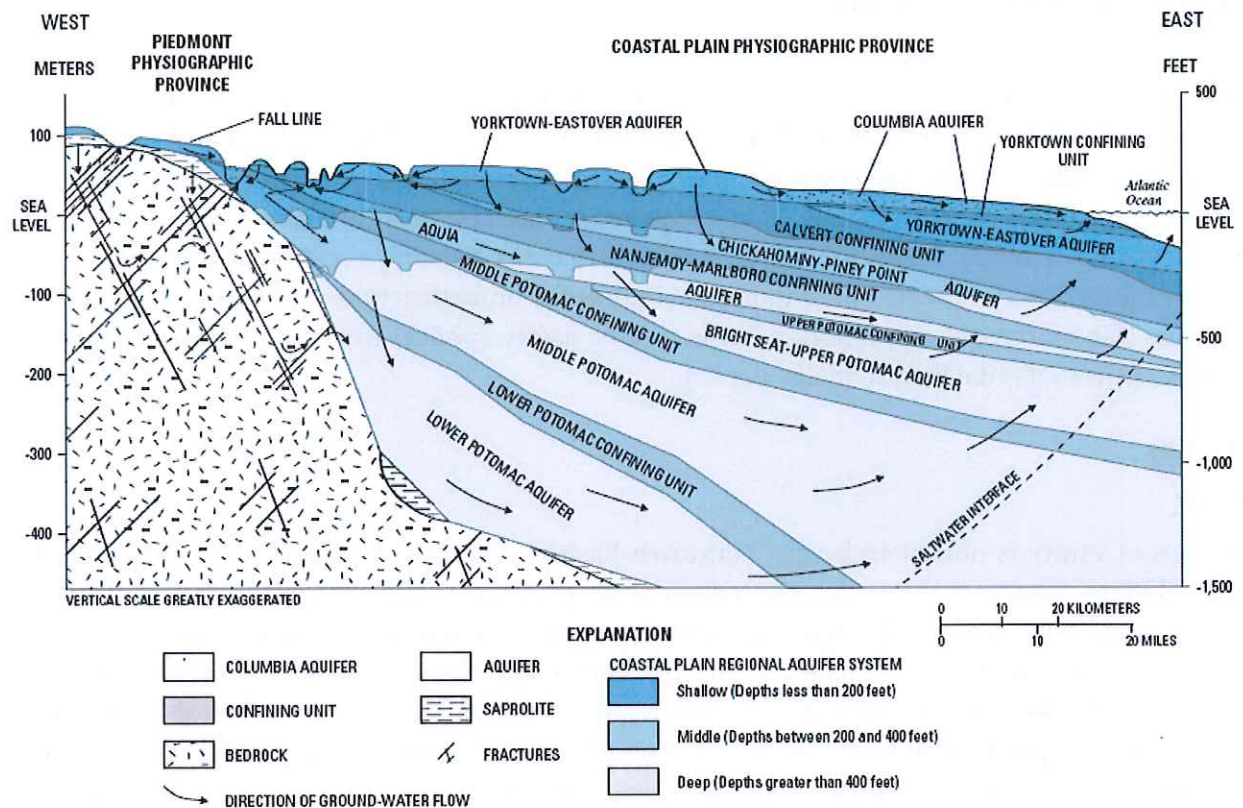
Much of the residential and small commercial water supply of the County is provided by private wells that draw water from the shallow, near surface "surficial" aquifer, sometimes referred to as the water table aquifer. (A map illustrating the depth to water table follows the aquifer system graphic.) This aquifer has a low potential for water yields and is high in chlorides and minerals¹⁰, affecting its quality as a potable water source. Wells can supply approximately 5-20 GPM, depending on precipitation and the resulting recharge. However, the aquifer is very vulnerable to pollution from both point and non-point sources. In particular, failing septic systems, deteriorating underground storage tanks, and contaminated surface runoff are significant threats to water quality in Mathews County. Consequently, the adequate supply of safe drinking water and protection of groundwater quality is a continuous challenge.

⁹ EEE Consulting, Inc. and Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. *DRAFT Regional Water Supply Plan, Existing Water Sources/ Water Uses/ Water Resources, Essex, King and Queen, King William, Mathews, and Middlesex Counties and Towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna, and West Point*. May 30, 2008.

¹⁰ Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. *Water Supply Management on the Middle Peninsula of Virginia – An Information Review*. 2002.



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Generalized hydrogeology of the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province showing the regional aquifer system. Source: U.S.G.S. and E.R. McFarland. *Hydrogeologic Framework, Analysis of Groundwater Flow, and Relations to Regional Flow in the Fall Zone near Richmond, Virginia*. 1997.

In 1995, R. Stuart Royer and Associates prepared a *Preliminary Water Study for the County Court House Community*. The study recommended an initial water supply plan for the central business district in Mathews, at the Courthouse, using three existing well systems (Cricket Hill Apartments, Riverside Convalescent Center, and the Lee-Jackson School). The study was updated in 1997 to determine estimated capacity, service area, water quality, costs and financing options. It was estimated that the first phase water system could serve 173 single-family units (all then existing). As of 2016, the County has not implemented a public water system for the Mathews Court House District area.



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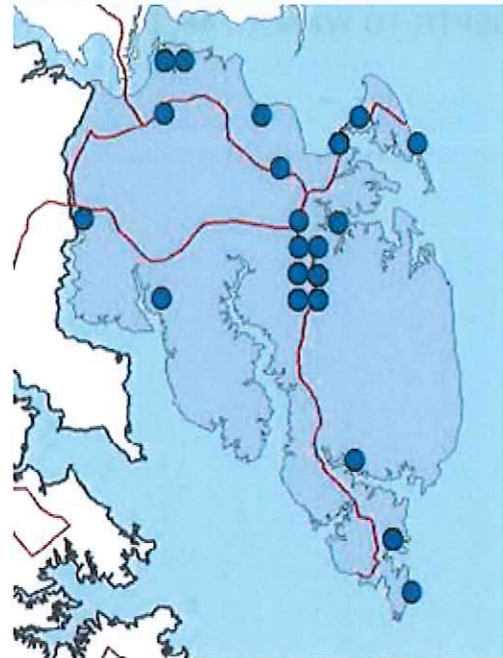
DEPTH TO WATER TABLE

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In 2005, state legislation was passed that required all counties, cities and towns in Virginia to prepare a local water supply plan, or be a part of a regional water supply plan by 2011. Mathews County elected to be a part of a regional plan that is being prepared by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission using water supply planning grants (2008, 2009) from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The regional plan was completed in 2010 and found in compliance by the Department of Water Quality in 2013. It covers the counties of Essex, King and Queen, King William, Mathews and Middlesex, as well as the towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna and West Point. The regional water supply plan consists of three phases: Phase I – Existing Water Sources, Uses and Resources; Phase II – Projected Water Demands, Management, and Drought Emergency Consistency Planning; and Phase III – Public and Agency Coordination and Adoption. All three phases have been completed and adopted by all the localities in the region.



Community Well Systems in Mathews County, May 2008. Source: Draft Phase I, Regional Water Supply Plan, EEE Consulting, Inc.

A 2011 Regional Water Supply Management Study¹¹ by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission indicated that from 2020-2030, Mathews County's water demands estimated to be .041 MGD, based on an estimated population of 9077. Most of the regional demand is expected to be from residential development; however, the greatest potential for depletion of the region's groundwater could be from large industrial or commercial users in urban areas outside the region. At present, King William County (along with other counties outside the Middle Peninsula Region) is defined as a "groundwater management area" which regulates water withdrawals; given water supply challenges, the management boundary could be expanded in the future to include additional counties in the region.

According to the 2011 Regional Water Supply Plan, Mathews County has 21 permitted community wells (see map) which provide water for eight community systems. In addition, there are two documented large agricultural users of water in Mathews County.

According to the Virginia Department of Health in conjunction with their Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), 30 water sources were monitored in Mathews County as of

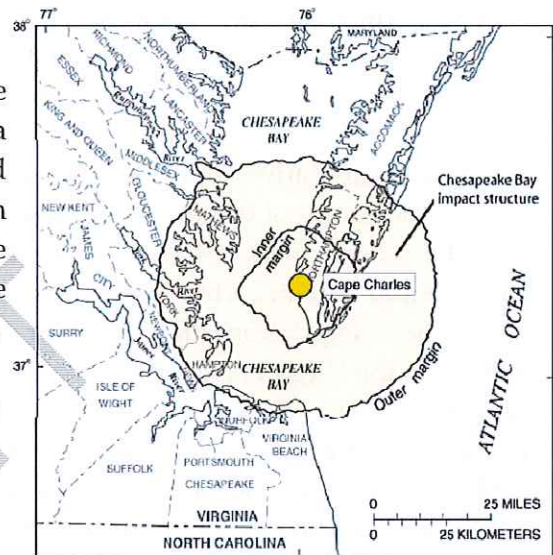
¹¹ Ibid.



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March 2016. These are privately owned wells that serve as a source of drinking water to the public. One option for reducing the risk for contamination to existing and future potable water sources would be to consider implementing a wellhead protection program in the County. Such a program should include provisions for public education; recommendations for land use management near water supplies; best management/development practices; and provide a designated local coordinator and other administrative partners.

Of special note is that most recent drilling studies by U.S.G.S. of the Chesapeake Impact Crater¹² indicate that the impact affected the geology and hydrology of the region more than originally thought. It is recognized that the impact resulted in subsidence, faulting, and saline groundwater in the region; however, core drilling samples indicate that the extent of the embedded, highly saline water may be a significant threat. In the Hampton Roads and Chesapeake Bay region this highly saline layer can intrude into potable groundwater when there are large withdrawals. This has occurred in the Middle Peninsula with large industrial withdrawals. Thus, there is continued interest in managing groundwater and in defining the limits of the salt "wedge" in order to prevent contamination of the groundwater.



Regional map of the Chesapeake Bay Impact Crater and the USGS drill site at Cape Charles
Source: U.S.G.S., Open-File Report 2007-1094, Site report for USGS test holes drilled at Cape Charles, Northampton County, Virginia, in 2004

An update to the regional water supply plan is being discussed between Middle Peninsula localities and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and could potentially begin in 2016. The update will entail revisions to detailed information on water sources, water quality and quantity issues, and specific recommendations for managing the County water supply and protecting surface and groundwater.

¹² Approximately 36 million years ago, a meteorite impacted the eastern part of what is now the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia. It left a crater about 85 kilometers (or 52 miles) in average diameter, the sixth largest on earth, and had a dramatic effect on the geology and hydrology of the region. The physical impact of the meteorite can be seen in the rivers of the region and as a ridge along Route 198 in the Cobbs Creek area of Mathews County.



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Sanitary Systems & Sewer

Most of Mathews County is served by private septic systems. With the high water table in the County, these systems have presented many challenges to water quality and to maintaining safe water supplies. Installation of new septic systems is regulated by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Department of Health; however, regular monitoring of the installed systems is more complex and often not routinely done, unless there is a public health concern. Consequently, to protect water quality and comply with the Chesapeake Bay Act, the County focuses preventative efforts on working with property owners to educate them on the need for regular pump-outs of septic tanks and to promote a septic tank pump-out program. The regional program is coordinated through the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and has limited regional funding; typically, the available County allocation is targeted to specific areas and income levels of residents of the localities in the Middle Peninsula.

While new alternative septic systems may provide some technological advances for property owners, the future of these systems and the maintenance challenges are uncertain. Thus, there is public concern with respect to potential for failing systems and/or the effectiveness of new experimental systems. This concern was elevated in 2009 when the Virginia General Assembly passed new legislation that assigned state regulation and permitting of these alternative systems to the Virginia Department of Health, pre-empting any review or permitting process by local government. While additional regulations on alternative on-site sewage systems are to be developed by the Virginia Department of Health, the resolution of this issue is of special interest to Mathews County, as well as other communities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia that have an abundance of private sanitary systems.

As of 2015, Mathews Court House is the only area served by a central wastewater treatment plant and sewage system. Connection to a Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) transmission force main line has been approved by the Board of Supervisors for several commercial properties in the Hudgins area, however, no connections to the line have been initiated as of March 2016. The County sewage treatment facility, constructed in 1976 with a design capacity of 100,000 GPD, is owned and operated by the HRSD which assumed responsibility of the system in 2000. The average daily flow of the plant is approximately 70,000 GPD (2009). With the system nearing the end of its useful life, the County worked with HRSD to upgrade and expand the existing Mathews Court House sanitary system. It was decided that the best alternative was to close the existing sewage treatment plant and develop a transmission force main with pump stations to serve the existing Sanitary District with the potential expansion for defined sanitary sewer areas. The new system was completed and extends from Mathews Court House generally along Church Street, Glebe Road, Buckley Hall Road, Windsor Road and John Clayton Memorial Highway to Gloucester and then to the regional HRSD treatment plant in York County. A map of the Mathews Sanitary Sewer Transmission Force Main and phased improvements is illustrated on the following page.



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SANITARY SEWER TRANSMISSION FORCE MAIN

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The Preliminary Engineering Report (2007) for the improvements prepared by Camp Dresser and McKee, Inc. recommended several alternatives and phasing for constructing the transmission force main and pump stations to Gloucester and the York River Treatment Facility. The proposed construction of the improvements will be in three phases – *Phase I* would convey wastewater from the Mathews Court House District to the Gloucester Courthouse area via a transmission force main along Church Street, Buckley Hall Road and Windsor Road with pump stations in the Mathews Court House area, Hudgins area and off Windsor Road between Rtes. 198 and 14. *Phase II* is proposed to convey wastewater from Gwynn's Island to Hudgins and then to Gloucester Courthouse using a pump station and equalization tank storage on Gwynn's Island. *Phase III* is proposed to convey wastewater from eastern Middlesex County (Deltaville) across the Piankatank River and connect with the Mathews County system. At present, the design and construction of Phase I improvements have been completed; there are no present plans to move forward with designs of the proposed Phase II and Phase III improvements.

Careful land planning and appropriate choices of future land uses abutting the sanitary sewer transmission force main will be important in managing growth and development along the Route 198 corridor and to the County as a whole. (Of course, the amount of development that can be accommodated also depends on available water supply.) For sanitary service planning purposes, Phase I is designed to accommodate an average flow capacity of up to approximately 150,000 GPD; the flow capacities for Phases II and III have not yet been designed, but would be in accordance with requested development demands and negotiated community financial participation. In addition, the transmission line could be expanded to meet additional requested demand by adding a parallel transmission line, pump stations, storage, etc.



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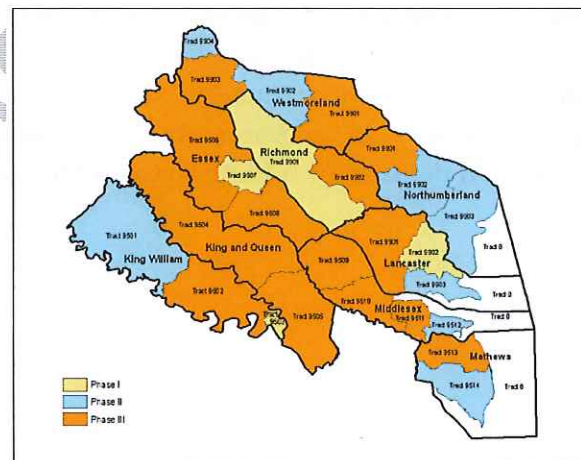
Solid Waste

Solid waste in the County is managed by the Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority (VPPSA), a regional governmental organization that provides services to ten southeast Virginia cities and counties. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors made up of one representative from each member city and county. Members pay for the specific services. The Authority operates a solid waste transfer station and convenience center in Mathews County on Route 14 in West Mathews. The transfer station accommodates household waste and some business waste, and offers recycling (paper, glass, metal, and plastic). The facility also allows the disposal of such items as tires (limited), scrap metal and white goods, oil and antifreeze, and batteries. The Mathews facility does not accept commercial/industrial waste, electronics or hazardous wastes. The Authority does provide special events for collecting electronic and household hazardous wastes.

Based on information contained in the June 2008 report by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, *Solid Waste Managed in Virginia During Calendar Year 2007*, the Middle Peninsula Landfill has a reported remaining life of 60.2 years.

Telecommunications

Access to broadband services (defined as a minimum 768 Kbps download and 200 Kbps upload) is important to economic development, education, public health and safety, and to the overall quality of life. Over the past few years, Mathews County has actively worked to improve and expand broadband communications to more of the County for the purpose of enhancing education and promoting economic development and home-based businesses. This initiative was apart of a larger state-wide economic development initiative to expand affordable broadband connectivity in the Commonwealth by 2010. In 2009, the County participated in a Virginia Rural Broadband Planning Initiative coordinated by the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Planning District Commissions. Phase I of the study was completed in 2008 and consisted of a survey/needs assessment and asset inventory; this effort revealed the region has a clear demand and need for high speed connectivity options and lags behind the nation in high-speed access. .



Map showing recommended phasing of broadband network for Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Regions (Mathews is Phase II and III).

Source: Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula Regional Community Broadband Telecommunication Planning Project, Phase 1 Final Report Needs Assessment & Broadband Education, Feb. 2008.



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In 2010, Mathews County joined with three other Middle Peninsula counties to establish the Middle Peninsula Broadband Authority. In September 2013, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission received funding from the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration to conduct a regional broadband study. Mathews County participated in the initiative which provided a comprehensive telecommunications plan for the region that established the extent and structure of recommended networks, funding options, and implementation strategies and models for broadband deployment throughout the region. The Commonwealth's priority is to connect the region's educational and health-care related facilities first, followed by residential users.

Transportation

In accordance with Sections 15.2.2222 and 2223 of the Virginia Code, each locality in the Commonwealth shall develop, as a part of the comprehensive plan, a transportation plan that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations. The transportation plan shall include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities and that support the planned development of the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not be limited to, roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, and public transportation facilities. This section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies critical transportation systems and infrastructure serving Mathews County, their deficiencies and recommendations for improvements. This section also highlights goals of both the County and the State in meeting transportation needs and demands.

Highway/Road Corridors and Systems

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) manages and plans for the streets and highways systems in Mathews County, as well as the surrounding region. In addition to the local Comprehensive Plan, long-range planning for Mathews County is done as part of the Rural Transportation Planning Program conducted by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and VDOT.

The 2035 Rural Long Range Plan was completed in 2012 by the Virginia Department of Transportation, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and local planners. The regional plan evaluates population, employment growth and land use on the transportation system and identifies any operational deficiencies, growth areas, critical freight infrastructure, bicycle/pedestrian improvements, and transit needs. The plan also incorporates recommended improvements that are prioritized by the locality in this Comprehensive Plan and should be adopted as an updated transportation component.

Mathews County's existing highway transportation network is presented in the map in the following pages. The two primary roads leading into Mathews County are State Route 14 (John Clayton Memorial Highway) and State Route 198 (Buckley Hall Road); these are classified as



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rural “minor arterials”. Several other roads are classified as rural “major collector” roads; these include Windsor Road (Route 3); Church Street to Main Street (Route 14) in Mathews and New Point Comfort Highway (Route 14) to Bavan; Route 223 (Crickett Hill Road) to Old Ferry Road to Gwynn; and Fitchetts Wharf Road and Haven Beach Road to Diggs. The VDOT 2025 State Highway Plan and the [2035 Rural Long Range Plan](#) for the Fredericksburg District recommends improvements to some of the most travelled sections of Routes 3, 14 and 198. [A summary of the prioritized improvements is provided in the following table. The entire list of VDOT deficiencies and recommendations for Mathews County transportation system are provided in the following pages.](#)

Mathews County Proposed Road Improvements VDOT 2025 State Highway Plan				
Route	Location Improvement	Length	Description	Est. Cost/Mile (2002)
Route 3	From Middlesex Co. to Route 14	4.78 miles	Rural, 4-lane + median	\$3.5 M
Route 14	From Route 3 to Route 198W	7.28 miles	Rural, 4-lane + median	\$3.5 M
Route 198/14	From Route 198W to Route 9246*	1.31 miles	Urban, 4-lane+ median	\$6.0 M
Route 198/14	From Route 9246 to Route 198E*	0.38 miles	Urban, 4-lane	\$5.0 M
Route 198	From Route 223 to Route 14W	0.93 miles	Rural, 4-lane + median	\$3.5 M
* Note: Lee Jackson Road was eliminated when the new Courthouse Facility was constructed at Liberty Square. Thus, the length of proposed improvements will be different for any future improvements to Route 198.				

[As of 2016, many of the transportation improvement projects listed have either commenced or are listed on the district's Six-Year Improvement Plan \(SYIP\). Several minor safety improvements have been programmed, as well as storm drainage improvements in the Mathews Court House area. A Drainage Improvement Study has been completed however no award of a construction contract for the improvements has occurred as of 2016.](#) These are outlined in the following table.

VDOT Fredericksburg District - FY2016-2021 Six-Year Improvement Program, Mathews County			
Location	Improvement	Est. Cost	Schedule
Route 14 at Route 198	Construct turn lanes	\$3.7 M	Complete
Route 14 at Route 617	Construct turn lanes	\$1.1 M	Complete
Route 14 at Route 660	Construct turn lanes	\$1.3 M	Complete
Route 617 to Route 654	Reconstruction (Widening)	\$2.9M	Underway
Route 14 at Mathews Court House	Drainage improvement study	\$4.3M	Complete
Route 3 over Burke Mill Stream	Bridge Replacement	\$2.2M	Construction Scheduled for



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			FY2022
Restore Drainage Facilities (outfalls)	Secondary Roads	\$65,000	Preliminary engineering Underway Construction scheduled for FY2020
New Point Lighthouse Stabilization and Restoration	Environmental Study	\$1,625,000	Preliminary Engineering and Construction Complete
Route 14 over N End Branch Road	Bridge Replacement	\$2,536,000	Preliminary Engineering Scheduled for FY2020 Construction in FY2022

Virginia Department of Transportation's Annual Average Daily Traffic Estimates provide travel patterns on segments of major highways in Mathews County. The most recent estimates show traffic patterns have decreased slightly from 2010 to 2012. More than 97 percent of the traffic generated throughout the county is from "four-tire" or automobile traffic while approximately 1 percent is generated from 3 axle, "truck and trailer" vehicles.

2012 Average Daily Traffic Volume on Primary Routes

Route #	From	To	2010	2012	% Trailer Traffic
3	Middlesex County Line	SR 198	5900	5800	1%
3	SR 14	Gloucester County Line	11000	11000	1%
14	SR198W	Buckley Hall Road	6900	6800	1%
14	Route 3	Windsor Road	6700	6700	1%
198	Route 14	Miller's Tavern	8700	8600	4%



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TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

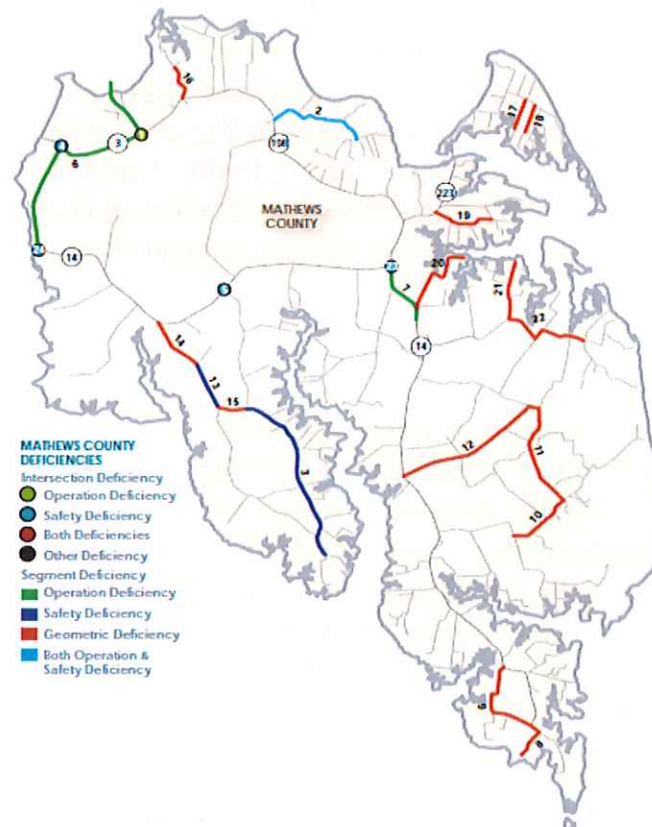
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MATHEWS COUNTY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** VA 3 (Twiggs Ferry Rd.)/VA 198 (Buckley Hall Rd.)
Mid-term consider signalization.
- 2** VA 626 (Hallieford Rd.) from VA 198 N. to VA 666
Short-term install stop bar; Long-term reconstruct to design standards and improve drainage and consider widening VA 626 where feasible.
- 3** VA 660 (East River Rd.) from VA 617 N. to VA 618
Short-term improve pavement markings; Mid-term add turn lanes as needed; Long-term realign intersections and implement access management.
- 4** VA 3 (Windsor Rd.)/VA 198 (Buckley Hall Rd.)
Long-term straighten VA 3 approach.
- 5** VA 14/VA 660
Long-term continue to monitor for safety improvements.
- 6** VA 3 (Windsor Rd.) from VA 14 to Middlesex Co. Line
Long-term widen to rural four-lane roadway with median.
- 7** VA 14 (Buckley Hall Rd.) from VA 198 W. to VA 9246
Long-term widen to rural four-lane roadway with median.
- 8** VA 14 (Old Bayside Drive) from VA 600 (Circle Drive) to Bayside Wharf
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 9** VA 600 (Circle Drive) from VA 14 N. to VA 14 S.
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 10** VA 609 (Bethel Beach Rd.) from VA 608 to VA 611
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 11** VA 611 (Garden Creek Rd.) from VA 613 W. to VA 609
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 12** VA 613 (Beaverdam Rd.) from VA 14 to VA 611 W.
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 13** VA 617 (North River Rd.) from VA 618 (Cardinal Rd.) to VA 654
Short-term reconstruct and realign roadway; Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 14** VA 617 (North River Rd.) from VA 654 to VA 14
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 15** VA 618 (Cardinal Rd.) from VA 617 to VA 660
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 16** VA 628 (Cobbs Creek Ln.) from VA 198 to VA 725
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 17** VA 636 (Bay Haven Drive) from VA 672 to VA 633
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 18** VA 637 (Gwynnsville Rd.) from VA 680 to VA 633
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 19** VA 639 (Crab Neck Rd.) from VA 223 E. to VA 648
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (11-foot lanes).
- 20** VA 641 (Pine Hall Rd.) from VA 14 to End of Rd.
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (11-foot lanes).
- 21** VA 642 (Fitchetts Wharf Rd.) from VA 643 to Fitchett Wharf
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (11-foot lanes).
- 22** VA 643 (Haven Beach Rd.) from VA 642 to VA 645
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiency (11-foot lanes).
- 23** VA 14/VA 198
Short-term construct turn lanes.
- 24** VA 3/VA 14
Mid-term extend existing turn bays to standards.





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Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

In recent years, transportation planning has emphasized including more multi-modal transportation options such as trails, bike lanes, pedestrian accommodations, bus/train, etc.). In 2000, the Middle Peninsula developed a Regional Bicycle Facility Plan which included Mathews County. The plan recommended a Class III bikeway network in the County of shared road facilities with bike route signage. Designated bike routes were proposed along State Routes 198 and 14. Additional County bike routes are included on the Transportation Network Map on the preceding page. At the present time, there are no signed bicycle route(s). This would be very beneficial to Mathews County for seasonal visitors and for the annual "Tour de Chesapeake" which has been a large draw for visitors and a boost to the local economy.

Diversification of transportation options such as bike and pedestrian facilities also promote the tourism and recreational sectors of Mathews County's economy. In 2016, the Mathews Board of Supervisors reaffirmed its goal of promoting tourism through the creation of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan. The Middle Peninsula Rural Transportation Work Program provides assistance to localities in creating local plans and studies to help determine the need and location of such facilities at little to no cost to its localities. Funding through VDOT's Rural Work Program and DCR's Transportation Alternative programs may be available to assist with County with Bike and Pedestrian planning.

Pedestrian sidewalks are located in the more densely populated areas of Mathews and Hudgins, though many of the existing sidewalks are in need of improvement. As additional development occurs in commercial centers and other designated commercial areas, pedestrian facilities should be expanded to accommodate pedestrian activity. A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project in downtown Mathews includes proposed improvements to the sidewalk on the west side of Brickbat Road south to the last commercial building on the block. Beginning in 2015, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, under the Rural Work Program, conducted a side walk gap analysis that identifies opportunities for developing new sidewalks and/ or making improvements to existing infrastructure. The final draft is expected to be completed late 2016.

Public Transportation

Public transportation for residents of Mathews County is provided by Bay Transit, a non-profit organization affiliated with Bay Aging. The transportation authority services twelve counties in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions and hosts forty buses (2009). The service operates from Urbanna (Middlesex County) and a new transit facility was constructed in 2013 in Gloucester County with funding provided by the Department of Public and Rail Transportation. The affordable transportation service operates weekdays from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM and transportation must be scheduled one day in advance. Bay Transit also offers a seasonal trolley services in some communities within the service area.



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In addition to the public bus service, the Middle Peninsula Rideshare Program operated by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission coordinates carpools, vanpools, telecommunication opportunities for residents of the region.

Park & Ride Facilities

Another facet of the multimodal transportation alternatives available in Mathews County is the location of Park and Ride facilities throughout the County. There are three park and ride facilities in Mathews County – on Route 14 (West Mathews), on Route 198 north of its intersection with Route 3 at Dixie and on Route 198 at Mathews Park. These facilities provide opportunities for ridesharing to the approximately 70% of out-commuters traveling to employment hubs throughout Hampton Roads, Richmond and Northern Virginia.

Storm Water Management & Road Drainage

Mathews County has poor drainage patterns as a result of the low elevation topography, poorly drained soils, high water table, tidal influences and the abundance of water features. The road network in the County includes side outfall ditches that assist in managing stormwater, when they are maintained; however, these ditches are not routinely maintained and frequently become overgrown and filled with sediment and debris. The County hosts a Ditching Committee to address citizen input issues and proposed solutions for maintaining ditches that pose a public safety or health problem.

One dilemma is that when left unattended, the ditches evolve and foster wetland vegetation, which can be beneficial in filtering stormwater pollutants; yet clearing of the vegetation becomes an environmental challenge.



Over the past several years, Mathews County, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) and VDOT have worked to address the issue of recurrent flooding contributed to by lack of ditch maintenance. These efforts include the exploration of the factors contributing to flooding and possible solutions to address flooding in highly susceptible areas.

As identified in the transportation section, VDOT has an outfall ditch maintenance project scheduled in the Six-Year Improvement Plan for the County as well as a drainage project scheduled for the Mathews Courthouse area. In addition, MPPDC has received funding from Virginia's Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM) to identify those recurrent flooding areas most impacted by lack of ditch maintenance and recommend solutions for improving ditch systems operation. In 2014, MPPDC, through funding from CZM, contracted with Draper Aden and Associates to complete an outfall ditch study of four areas in Mathews County that experience recurrent flooding during significant storm events. The study revealed the factors that contribute to recurrent flooding in the areas such as subsidence, sea level rise and/or ditch



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maintenance and made recommendations on addressing the issue. MPPDC received subsequent funding from CZM for a ditch inventory and mapping project in Mathews County which is currently underway.

It is anticipated that the County will advertise for bid selected ditch maintenance work in late 2016 or early 2017 using VDOT revenue-sharing funds.

Recreation Facilities

Mathews County has one inland community park, Mathews Park, that hosts a variety of public recreation facilities on ten acres, including picnic shelters, playground, tennis courts, basketball courts, and multi-purpose ball fields. The facilities are located in Central Mathews, adjacent to Mathews High School. While the County manages and maintains Mathews Park, the Mathews YMCA is under contract to the County for managing leisure programs and recreational events. In addition to the park, there are several community centers located throughout the County that offer specialized or recreational programs, and community meeting facilities. These include the Boys' and Girls' Club in Central Mathews, as well as community centers in West Mathews and on Gwynn's Island. A map showing the location of major park facilities, community centers, and the Mathews Birding and Wildlife Trail Loop is on the following page.



In addition to inland facilities, there are waterfront properties throughout the County that provide access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Some of the most popular public waterfront facilities include: Haven/Festival Beach, Williams Wharf Landing, and Piankatank River Landing, owned by the County. Also, Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, owned by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the New Point Comfort Lighthouse Observation Walkway, owned by the Nature Conservancy, and the Bayside Observation Deck/Picnic Pavilion owned by the Mathews Land Conservancy are important waterfront amenities.

Public access to County beaches and waterfront areas is of special interest to governmental officials and to residents of Mathews County. In 2003, the County adopted the *Mathews County Statewaters Access Plan* which provides an inventory of all County public water access properties



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and established community goals and recommendations for expanding facilities and public access.

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RECREATION FACILITIES

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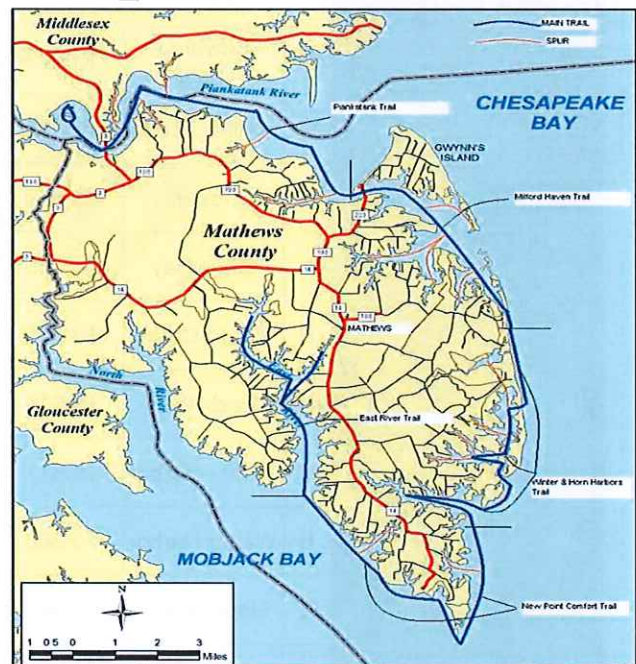
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There are approximately twenty-one public access sites identified and discussed in the plan that provide public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries with other potential access sites on publicly and privately owned property throughout the County. A list of those sites and the amenities associated with each are identified in the two tables that follow the recreation map. Another property acquisition by the County is the East River Boat Yard in West Mathews. In addition, a landowner donated nine acres of waterfront property to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority for public water access and environmental education.

The Blueways Network in Mathews County is a recreational asset for non-motorized watercraft that serves not only residents, but also many visitors. In the County, the blueways trail system covers over ninety miles of water and includes: Piankatank River Trail, Milford Haven/Gwynn's Island Trail, East River Trail, Winter Harbor Trail, and New Point Comfort Trail. These trails were developed and mapped by a volunteer Blueways Committee established in conjunction with McSEED. The group also has published a trail guide map.

In 2009, VIMS worked with a variety of partners¹³ to develop the "Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail" to preserve the valued coastal landscape and share the nautical heritage of the County. The first phase of the project is complete for the East River. More detailed mapping information on the trail can be found on line at <http://ccrm.vims.edu>.

All of these trails are part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail




Map of blueways trails in Mathews County. Source: Mathews County Website, www.co.mathews.va.us.

¹³Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail Partners include: VIMS, Mathews County, Archeological Society of Virginia (Middle Peninsula Chapter), Bay Trail Outfitters, Mathews County Historical Society, Mathews County Visitor Information Center, Mathews Memorial Library, Mathews Blueways Water Trail, Middle Peninsula PDC / Public Access Authority, New Point Comfort Preservation Task Force, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service/4H Youth Development, and National Park Service.



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(National Park Service).

Mathews County Statewaters Access – Site Information								
 Public Access Point	Priority	Waterway	Location in County	Map No.	Ownership	Zoning	Acreage	Beach Frontage (lf)
Auburn Landing	L	North River	Rt 620	23-A-20	public & private	B1	0.67	80 ft
Roane's Point Lndg	M	Piankatank	Rt 630	1-A-21	public	B1	0.4	216 ft
Warehouse Crk Lndg	L	Piankatank	Rt 631	2-A-1	public	B1	0.24	
Piankatank River Lndg	M	Godfrey Bay	Rt 632	5-A-86A	public	B1	0.48	
Roses Creek Lndg	H	Queens Creek	Rt 662	10-A-206	public	B1	0.64	420 ft
Grimstead Pblc Lndg	H	Milford Haven	Rt 223	11A5-A-6	public	B1/R1	0.927	130 ft
Milford Landing	M	Edwards Creek	Rt 672	11A6-A-11A	public	R1	0.5	
Whites Creek Lndg	M	Whites Creek	Rt 682	22-A-118	public	B1	0.25	61 ft
Festival Beach	H	Ches Bay	Rt 643	27-7-1,2,3	public	C	5.339	
Haven Public Beach	L	Ches Bay	Rt 645	27-6-1,2	public	C	15.8	
Town Point Landing	H	Put-In-Creek	Rt 615	29-A-201	public & private	B1		
William's Wharf Lndg	H	East River	Rt 614	29-A-221,222	public	B1	3.35	
Winter Harbor Lndg (Old Mill Landing)	M	Winter Harbor	Rt 611	36-A-21A	public	B1		< 125 ft
Winter Harbor Haven	H	Winter Harbor	Rt 608	36-A-148	public	B1	0.25	180 ft
Horn Harbor Landing	L	Horn Harbor	Rt 698	40-A-88	public	B1	0.9	1,000 ft
Davis Creek Landing	M	Davis Creek	Rt 689	43-A-36	public	B1	0.023	208 ft
Doctor's Creek Lndg	L	Doctor's Creek	Rt 699	42-5-4B	public	B1	0.5	
New Point Comfort	H	Ches Bay	Rt 600	45-A-2 & 3	private	C		



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East River Bt Lndg	East River	Rt 619	public			
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Mathews County Statewaters Access - Site Amenities																								
<div> Public Access Point</div>	Waterway	Signs	Shoulder Pkg	Sm Pkg Lot < 10	Lg Pkg Lot > 10	Trailer Pkg	Picnic Area	Waste Receptacles	Lighting	Restrooms	Hiking Trail	Bike Trail	Rules	Food	Fuel	Handicap	Fee/Permit	Slips/Mooring	Boat Storage	Fishing Pier	On-top Launch	Unimproved Ramp	Cement Ramp	Swim Beach
Auburn Landing	North River			◆																	◆			
Roane's Point Lndg	Piankatank			◆		◆															◆			
Warehouse Crk Lndg	Piankatank	◆																			◆			◆
Piankatank River Lndg	Godfrey Bay				◆	◆	◆	◆					◆								◆			◆
Roses Creek Lndg	Queens Creek			◆		◆												◆		◆		◆		
Grimstead Pblc Lndg	Milford Haven	◆			◆	◆			◆	◆				◆				◆	◆				◆	
Milford Landing	Edwards Creek	◆	◆															◆		◆		◆		
Whites Creek Lndg	Whites Creek			◆		◆														◆	◆	◆		
Festival Beach	Ches Bay	◆	◆										◆								◆			◆
Haven Public Beach	Ches Bay	◆	◆										◆								◆			◆
Aaron's Beach	Ches Bay		◆										◆											◆
Town Point Landing	Put-In-Creek	◆		◆	◆															◆	◆	◆		
William's Wharf Lndg	East River	◆			◆	◆			◆				◆			◆			◆	◆	◆		◆	
Winter Harbor Lndg (Old Mill Landing)	Winter Harbor	◆	◆															◆		◆	◆	◆		
Winter Harbor Haven	Winter Harbor	◆			◆	◆									◆					◆	◆			◆
Horn Harbor Landing	Horn Harbor		◆																		◆			
Davis Creek Landing	Davis Creek				◆	◆									◆					◆	◆			
Doctor's Creek Lndg	Doctor's Creek		◆																		◆			



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New Point Comfort	Ches Bay	♦			♦		♦	♦								♦				♦	♦				
East River Boat Yd	East River		♦		♦															♦	♦				♦

RECREATION: BLUEWAYS AND PUBLIC ACCESS

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MARINAS

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Mathews County is a member of the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (PAA). The General Assembly created the PAA to promote recreational public access throughout the Commonwealth. Since its inception, the MP CBPAA has provided support to the Middle Peninsula localities in acquiring and identifying public recreational access to bodies of water in the region. Several waterfront properties in Mathews County have been donated to the PAA by private landowners for public use, including [the Mathews](#) Heritage Park site.

Recreational facilities are not only an important asset at the local level but also promote the regional and state tourism goals. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) provides policy and direction to the public and private sectors so they may better manage recreational resources, and outdoor and open spaces. DCR [helps local parks and recreation departments](#) through expertise, training and funding. The Land and Water Conservation Fund program administered through Virginia Department of Conservation assists with acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas.

DCR provides guidance on management of recreational resources through the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP). The Virginia Outdoors Plan is the state's comprehensive plan for land conservation, outdoor recreation and open-space planning and is applicable at all levels of government and the private sector. The VOP receives input from public meetings and partnerships with local and regional staff who helped to identify the Plan's priority considerations.

Public Safety

A map of public safety and other community facilities in Mathews County is on the following page. The Mathews County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services and offers a variety of public safety programs. The Sheriff's Office employs approximately **17** persons (officers, dispatchers, and administrative staff). The Sheriff's Office also coordinates neighborhood watch programs for various areas of the County and offers business and residential security check services. Mathews County participates in a regional jail authority, which operates the Middle Peninsula Regional Security Center, located in Saluda, Virginia. In addition, several state police officers are assigned to Mathews County.

Fire and rescue services in Mathews County are provided primarily by volunteers. There are five fire stations and one rescue squad that provide emergency services to businesses and residents. Fire stations are located in Bohannon, Cobbs Creek, Gwynn's Island, Mathews and New Point. A rescue squad station is located in Hudgins





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and is the largest of the public safety stations; it includes personnel trained as “first responders” who can provide skilled emergency care. Some paid personnel help staff the rescue squad. In addition, the County has agreements with neighboring Counties to provide mutual assistance.

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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Hazard Mitigation

The County is a participating partner in the *Middle Peninsula Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan*, which was adopted in 2005 with an update currently underway. The update is scheduled for completion late 2016. This plan was initially developed in conjunction with the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 which required local governments to develop mitigation plans to reduce risk from natural hazards. The regional plan is approved by the County, as well as the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The current regional plan is in the process of being updated and is expected to be adopted by the jurisdictions in the Middle Peninsula after it is reviewed and approved by VDEM and FEMA. The draft update of the plan identifies the most critical risks to the Middle Peninsula were from hurricanes, winter storms (ice), summer storms, lightning, and coastal flooding. In Mathews County the risks were associated with:

- **Hurricanes and Coastal Storms** –The waterfront position of Mathews County and low-lying lands are particularly susceptible to damage from storms and hurricanes. Flooding from storm surges, wind, and heavy rains have the potential to block transportation routes and inundate properties. The Storm Surge Map on the following page indicates that approximately 50% of the County has the potential to be damaged by a Category 2 hurricane and about 80% by a Category 4. Mathews County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Shrink-Swell Soils** – The northeastern portion of Mathews County and waterfront lands adjacent to rivers and streams contain soils that have a high potential for shrink-swell (expands with moisture content). Most of these soils are within lands included within the lands managed under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA).
- **Wildfires** - The region is at some risk for wildfires because of the widespread forests. According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, of the approximately 65,500 forested acres in Mathews County, over 75% was identified by the Virginia Department of Forestry as being at medium to high risk for wildfires.
- **Drought** – According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, there have been five major droughts in Virginia since 1900. The last severe drought in Tidewater was in 2001-02. In Mathews, a significant drought can result in significant water supply issues as a result of the aquifer limitations, the number of shallow private wells, and the lack of a public water supply.

The County has an assigned Emergency Services Coordinator position which is responsible for coordinating and updating the hazard mitigation plan every five years. A High Speed Emergency Notification System (Code Red) for the County and improved digital mapping at a 100 or 200-foot scale (then at 400-foot scale) has been implemented. Residents can register for notification of emergency events, such as hurricanes or flooding, by having a recorded message sent to their home phone, cell phone or by e-mail.



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STORM SURGE

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Education, Health & Public Services

County Schools and Continued Education

Mathews County has three public schools that provide educational services to residents: Lee-Jackson Elementary School (Kindergarten to Grade 4, constructed 1996); Thomas Hunter Middle School (Grades 5-8, constructed 1954); and Mathews High School (Grades 9-12, constructed 1939, recent addition 2000). All of these facilities are located in Central Mathews and are fully accredited by the State of Virginia and meet the established Standards of Learning. In 2015-16 the enrollment is 1,101 students (368 elementary, 327 middle, and 406 high school). Programs offered by the schools include: special education, gifted education (SAIL, Scholastically Abled Identified Learners), alternative career and technical training, advanced placement, dual enrollment, and extracurricular sports and other activities. The County schools partner with Rappahannock Community College in Glenss (Gloucester County) for a variety of courses. Also, the County is a participant in the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Marine and Environmental Science.



The school system has a Strategic Plan for educational programs, facilities, personnel, and communication. Some of the important strategies from the 2014-15 Focus Plan include:

- Developing a capital improvement plan for short and long-term needs (by department and school).
- Recruiting and retaining quality personnel through mentorship, professional training opportunities, recognition of outstanding employees, and competitive salaries and benefits.
- Increasing student achievement and enhancing learning opportunities.
- Involving parents in the child's learning process through increased communication, events, and volunteer opportunities.
- Prepare students for life after high school through emphasis on college awareness career and technical education awareness, especially career exploration and planning.



Rappahannock Community College offers associate degrees in arts and sciences, business management, nursing, protective services, and general engineering technology. In addition, the college includes a Workforce and Community Development Center that provides a GED program (Middle College), careers certificate program, and specialized workforce training.



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The Bay School for the Arts, operated by a non-profit organization, is a community arts education facility in downtown Mathews. The school hosts educational workshops and training in the visual arts, heritage crafts and performing arts. The Bay School Cultural Arts Center offers life-long, continued learning opportunities for both adults and children. In addition, they host special events and operate an art gallery and art supply store.

County Administration

Mathews County is governed by a five member Board of Supervisors (elected at large). A County Administrator handles day-to-day operations. County administrative facilities are located in downtown Mathews on the historic Mathews Court House Green. In 2005, a new courts facility was built on Route 14/198 near the entrance to downtown Mathews. The existing County Administration offices (built circa 1950) underwent minor renovations in 2009 to house the County's Registrar.

Library

Mathews Memorial Library is located in downtown Mathews in a renovated building on Main Street. A [library expansion project was completed in 2013](#). The Library offers on-line catalog services and free Wi-Fi within the library. Also, there is public meeting space that can accommodate approximately 50 persons (John Warren Cooke Conference Center). In addition to library and reference services, the Mathews Memorial Library sponsors programs for adults such as book clubs, author forums, computer training, literacy training, employment search and music appreciation programs. The Library also hosts programs for children including story time, after school activities, special events, and various educational and homework resources.



Health and Human Services

Many of the public services related to health care and human needs are provided by the County Department of Social Services and the Mathews County Health Department (State of Virginia). Riverside Walter Reed Hospital in Gloucester (67 beds) is the closest full service hospital; it offers the following services: emergency care, adult and pediatric critical care, general surgical, orthopedic, obstetrics/gynecology, internal, gastrointestinal, pulmonary, cardiac, and family practice. The Riverside Convalescence Care Center in downtown Mathews provides approximately 60 beds for comprehensive nursing and rehabilitative care.

The Mathews County Health Department is part of the Three Rivers Health District and



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provides health care services, family planning, and other related services. The health department is involved in many children's health programs, screenings, and preventative public health matters, including well and septic permits and food service sanitation. The Health Department hosts a Free Medical Clinic monthly in conjunction with the Gloucester-Mathews Free Clinic. The clinic is staffed by trained medical volunteers and services are provided to residents who are uninsured and meet certain poverty guidelines.

The Mathews County Department of Social Services provides protective services for children and adults; operates the County foster care program; manages the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW); and offers a variety of assistance programs including Medicaid, food stamps, temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), and other assistance for needy or disadvantaged persons. The Department works very closely with the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Various other community organizations and agencies provide a wide diversity of services to youth, elderly, mentally/physically-challenged, and other residents in need. These include: Mathews YMCA, Mathews Boys and Girls Club, Mathews County 4H, Bay School, Bay Agency on Aging, Meals on Wheels, Hands Across Mathews, Habitat for Humanity, and Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board.

The Middle Peninsula Safety Net Coalition assists the region in coordinating health care and human services. Members of the coalition include: Gloucester-Mathews Free Clinic, Peninsula Institute for Community Health, Three Rivers Health District, Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board, Mathews Community Foundation, Mathews Department of Social Services, Mathews YMCA, Bay Aging, and the Northern Neck Middle Peninsula Tele-health Consortium. In 2008, the Coalition developed and published a resource directory for Mathews' residents of the various health care and related services.



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Public Facilities and Services Opportunities and Challenges 2030

Water and Sewer

One of the challenges for Mathews County in the future will be to provide safe water and sanitary sewage systems. Expansion of the sanitary sewer transmission force main from historic Mathews Court House to Gloucester may assist development opportunities in Mathews Court House and in the commercial nodes along the corridor (e.g., Ward's Corner, Hudgins, Cobbs Creek and Dixie); however, with limited capacity of the force main to convey sanitary sewage, there should be taken into consideration of any large scale subdivision, commercial, or industrial development. Any future connections to the transmission force main will be in accordance with adopted recommendations from the County Board of Supervisors; however, preference should be given to serving the existing Mathews Court House Sanitary District and business or mixed-use development at primary commercial nodes, as opposed to residential development.

Since a majority of the County is served by private on-site septic and alternative sewage system systems, it will be important to maintain a good monitoring and septic tank pump-out program. Citizen education and close collaboration and communication with the Virginia Department of Health will be invaluable to the County in protecting water supplies and public health. Especially with respect to alternative sewage facilities, it will be important to keep open communication with property owners and the health department to ensure proper maintenance and operation.

Water supply for the entire region is a significant issue in the long-term; the regional water supply plans, currently being scheduled for an update, will provide more information and guidance with respect to public policies and recommended actions. This plan should be incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by amendment. In Mathews County, the locations of some wells are unknown. In the Main Street – Historic Courthouse area, this limits approval for new businesses that require water for restrooms, kitchens and other uses. Maintenance of some wells is not possible, and there is increased risk of damage from fires without hydrants or fire sprinkler systems to protect older buildings.

Telecommunications

Expanding opportunities for broadband service in the County and other emerging telecommunication technologies would benefit residents and businesses. With increasing opportunities for home-based occupations, telecommuting and distance learning, the County has a unique ability to draw, or employ, residents for small business development. Expanded services and close attention to integrating cutting-edge communication technology can enhance telecommunication opportunities and positively influence the community's economy and quality of life.